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Subject: Seattle Squeeze Update

Council President Harrell and Councilmember O'Brien:

We appreciate your ongoing engagement related to our operational efforts associated with the mobility challenges we face during this period of time we are referring to as the "Seattle Squeeze." In 2018, we began unprecedented planning and took significant steps in order to prepare operationally and externally for this years-long challenge for each major "Squeeze" event. We made new investments in transit, changed corridors, created a 24/7 operations center, conducted numerous outreach efforts to businesses, the media and neighborhoods. We also took new measures, such as standing up inter-agency operations and planning centers to ensure we were equipped to adapt and respond in real time to unexpected issues inhibiting the movement of people, goods and services. These efforts also benefitted us in our winter storm planning and response in February of 2019.

To date, the Mayor and I have been pleased with the performance of our team in mitigating and minimizing negative impacts. As you are briefed on the City's upcoming preparations, much credit should go to SDOT Director Sam Zimbabwe and Heather Marx, Director of Downtown Mobility, SPD Chief Carmen Best and SFD Chief Harold Scoggins, and Mike Worden, Director of Citywide Mobility Coordination as well as multiple other City Department leaders. All of them were supported by a hard working team of city employees – many of who kept working long hours despite challenges to them and their families. Most of all, we also must applaud and thank the people of Seattle for their support and patience, willingness to adapt and use transit and other alternatives to help everyone through this period of time. We showed how much we can accomplish when so many choose to act together to make a difference.

I understand Council has inquired specifically about the work of Director Worden and I wanted to share some information on his efforts and deliverables. From the outset, the Mayor's goal was to have day-to-day interagency alignment around operations and planning for the Seattle Squeeze. SDOT personnel could focus on traffic operations and congestion mitigation with the support of Director Worden to surface issues from other City departments and to help triage issues as they emerge. We're also fortunate to get the additional senior leadership we needed immediately in this difficult time as SDOT Director Sam Zimbabwe transitioned to his role.

During the weeks of Viaduct closure leading up to the SR99 Tunnel opening, Director Worden was instrumental in facilitating cross-departmental communication and information sharing with the Mayor's Office for real time incidents. As you remember, Director Worden briefed Council on our "Squeeze" plan and performance to include the February rush hour incident of the Stanford bus fire on I-5 underneath an overpass, which was resolved quickly. Fortunately, there were limited similar major incidents during the viaduct closure. Subsequently, he has provided guidance and monitored travel time and congestion metrics from SDOT to the Mayor's Office and helped monitor and alert senior leadership to emergent mobility challenges and issues.

In addition to monitoring in real time incidents, his two primary assignments have focused on establishing a multi-department effort to improve the quality of and response times for traffic incident management as well as improve coordinated responses to major incidents and congestion management at the regional level.

First, he has been addressing City-wide operational plans. An analysis of the 2015 fish truck incident resulted in 114 recommendations for process improvements, of which the final 30 recommendations are in the process of being addressed. Director Worden has been leading the efforts to implement these final recommendations to ensure we do not repeat the procedures that

led to a nine-hour closure of a major roadway.

Second, Director Worden manages the City's Traffic Incident Management and Congestion Management program, which is a cross-department, City-wide coordination effort to enhance the City's capabilities and performance. This work is happening in coordination with his leadership on the regional Seattle Area Congestion Management Joint Operations Working Group (SAJOG) to implement region-wide process and performance improvements. As you may know, SAJOG is a partnership, formally established in January 2018, bringing together WSDOT; SDOT; SPR; WSP; SPD; SFD; KC Metro, Challenge Seattle and UW. Joining together in information sharing and response on major incidents, the SAJOG approach enhances region-wide traffic incident management with a focus on improved congestion management. Director Worden, through his role as a key member of SAJOG is working with the State to secure Federal funding to support regional congestion management through a best-in-class regional Virtual Coordination Center (VCC). He is also leading the drafting of the Concept of Operations for the VCC and is deeply involved in drafting the governance structure and program plan for its success.

Director Worden's efforts have helped us navigate and focus our attention on improving the level of preparedness and training for all our City personnel responsible for responding to various real-time operations centers (SCL, SPU, SPD, SFD, SDOT among others). His support will be needed the rest of this year as SR99 Tunnel tolling begins and to prepare for Connect 2020 (Eastlink connection to International District/Chinatown Station) construction in the Downtown Tunnel.

Director Worden's role was established as a temporary position with an expectation that the need for ongoing senior level coordination to be assessed as we gained additional experience with managing through the Squeeze. Fortunately, the worst-case scenarios have not materialized, and our operational planning and preparation has paid dividends. As such, barring unforeseen circumstances during SR-99 tolling or preparation for Connect 2020, Director Worden should be able to complete the foundational work around incident management response and SAJOG by the end of December, at which time his work with the City will come to an end. We're grateful he was able to offer his expertise to help Seattle in this challenging time.

I want to again thank you for your continued attention and support for the City's efforts to maintain mobility during this critical and transformative time for Seattle and the region.

Sincerely,

Mike Fong

Senior Deputy Mayor